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GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN, BRISBANE.

BULLETIN NO. 4 OF 1941.

Confidential until released for publication as under :-

Evening Papers .. 26th February, 1941.
Morning Papers .. 27th February, 1941.

RETAIL PRICES - DECEMBER QUARTER, 1940.

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) "B" Series.

Index numbers for December Quarter 1940 (with base 1000 in 1923-27 for the six State capitals) were, - Brisbane 894, Toowoomba 869, Rockhampton 860, Townsville 928, Bundaberg 830, Charters Towers 824 and Warwick 814.

From September Quarter to December Quarter 1940 this index increased in all cities as follows :- Brisbane 2.28 per cent., Toowoomba 3.03 per cent., Rockhampton 1.65 per cent., Townsville 0.76 per cent., Bundaberg 2.72 per cent., Charters Towers 0.61 per cent. and Warwick 2.65 per cent. The Food and Groceries Index increased in all cities by the following percentages :- Brisbane 4.66, Toowoomba 4.99, Rockhampton 2.53, Townsville 1.14, Bundaberg 3.92, Charters Towers 0.52 and Warwick 3.94. The chief price rises were beef, potatoes, mutton, tea, milk and onions. The Rent Index remained practically stationary in all cities.

Compared with December Quarter 1939 there were increases in the combined Food and Rent Index in Brisbane (4.56 per cent.), Toowoomba (4.95 per cent.), Rockhampton (2.33 per cent.), Townsville (1.64 per cent.), Bundaberg (3.62 per cent.), Charters Towers (0.24 per cent.), and Warwick (3.30 per cent.). The Food and Groceries Index showed percentage rises as follows :- Brisbane 7.10, Toowoomba 8.08, Rockhampton 3.56, Townsville 2.53, Bundaberg 5.30, Charters Towers 0.10, Warwick 4.55.

In Brisbane the most important increase, as far as food and groceries were concerned, was that for beef. Smaller rises were recorded for potatoes, mutton, onions, milk and salmon. Other increases were unimportant.

Rent increases during the year were very small.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers for December quarter 1940 (with base 1000 in 1923-27 for the six State capitals) were :- Brisbane 938, Toowoomba 932, Rockhampton 932, Townsville 972, Bundaberg 907, Charters Towers 938, and Warwick 896.

From September Quarter to December Quarter 1940 there were increases in all cities in the "All Items" Index number as follows :- Brisbane 3.53 per cent., Toowoomba 4.13 per cent., Rockhampton 3.56 per cent., Townsville 2.42 per cent., Bundaberg 3.66 per cent., Charters Towers 2.29 per cent. and Warwick 3.94 per cent.

As stated above the Food and Grocery Index rose in all cities between 0.52 and 4.99 per cent. but Rents were practically stable. The Clothing and Footwear Index showed rises as follows :- Brisbane 7.43 per cent., Toowoomba 9.44 per cent., Rockhampton 9.00 per cent., Townsville 7.75 per cent., Bundaberg 7.73 per cent., Charters Towers 7.68 per cent. and Warwick 9.73 per cent.. The Miscellaneous Group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares etc. also increased in cost. In Brisbane the percentage increases were :- Food and Groceries 4.66, Rent 0.12, Clothing 7.43, Miscellaneous 0.31, and "All Items" 3.53.

Compared with December Quarter 1939 the "C" Index showed the following percentage increases in each city :- Brisbane 7.32, Toowoomba 8.12, Rockhampton 6.88, Townsville 5.54, Bundaberg 6.58, Charters Towers 4.69, Warwick 6.41. Food and Grocery costs were higher in all cities by from 0.10 to 8.08 per cent. Rent increases were small. The percentage increases in Clothing in each city were :- Brisbane 18.73, Toowoomba 21.28, Rockhampton 20.07, Townsville 17.72, Bundaberg 17.56, Charters Towers 17.15, Warwick 18.64. The Miscellaneous Group increased between 1.78 and 4.40 per cent.

In Brisbane the percentage increases were :- Food and Groceries 7.10, Rent 0.47, Clothing 18.73, Miscellaneous 2.71, "All Items" 7.32. Food and Groceries (chiefly beef, potatoes and mutton) accounted for 35 per cent. of the net increase in the "All Items" Index and Clothing for 57 per cent.

Comparison with Other States.

The rise in prices between the last pre-war period (third quarter of 1939) and the fourth quarter of 1940 appears to have been greater in Queensland than in any other State, whether we take the Food and Groceries Index or the All Items Index ("C" Series). This, however, is in part explained by the peculiar movement of potato prices, which showed an exceptional rise in Brisbane. The following table shows percentage changes in prices including and excluding potatoes:

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PRICES BETWEEN THIRD QUARTER 1939 AND FOURTH QUARTER 1940.

		Food and Groceries.		All Items.	
		Including Potatoes.	Excluding Potatoes.	Including Potatoes.	Excluding Potatoes.
Brisbane	..	7.60	7.57	8.51	7.57
Sydney	..	4.95	6.65	8.04	9.21
Melbourne	..	3.22	5.85	7.73	7.92
Adelaide	..	1.80	1.77	5.98	6.00
Perth	..	0.53	2.68	5.42	7.26
Hobart	..	6.11	7.97	7.85	9.11

If potatoes are omitted from the calculation, therefore, Brisbane food prices are seen to have risen less than in Hobart but more than in the other four States. In the All Items Index the Brisbane rise does not differ greatly from the Australian average if potatoes are excluded.

The above table refers to the capital cities only, but the Weighted Average - Five Towns Indexes would not show a substantially different result.

Generally speaking, food prices have risen more rapidly, non-food prices slightly less rapidly, in Queensland than in the other States.

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25th February, 1941.

Comparison of Costs in the Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts necessary in December quarter 1940 to purchase what would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

City	All Items	Food and Groceries	Rent (4 and 5 Rooms)	Clothing and Footwear
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Brisbane ..	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0	1. 0. 0
Toowoomba ..	19.10	10. 2	19.10	1. 0. 4
Rockhampton ..	19.10	1. 0. 3	17. 7	1. 0. 7
Townsville ..	1. 0. 0	1. 1. 2	1. 0. 1	1. 0. 4
Bundaberg ..	19. 4	1. 0. 9	14.11	1. 0. 1
Charters Towers	1. 0. 0	1. 0.10	14. 5	1. 0. 6
Warwick ..	19. 1	19. 6	16. 1	10. 3

Comparison of Commonwealth and States Basic Wages.

In the following statement comparisons are made between Commonwealth and State Court basic wages in the various Capital Cities and States. The figures in the columns headed "Adjusted State Basic Wage" show the amounts a worker would require in Brisbane (or Queensland) to purchase the goods and services that he could buy with the State Basic Wages of other States. The margins between the Brisbane (or Queensland) figure and the other figures in these columns show the advantage to the Queensland State Basic Wage earner.

STATE.	METROPOLITAN.				STATE a.		
	Price Index Nos. "C" Series.	Common-wealth Basic Wage b.	State Basic Wage c.	Adjusted State Basic Wage d.	Price Index Nos. "C" Series.	State Basic Wage e.	Adjusted State Basic Wage f.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Queensland ..	938	4. 2. 0	4. 4. 0	4. 4. 0	939	4. 4. 8	4. 4. 8
New South Wales	1008	4. 8. 0	4. 8. 0	4. 1.11	1005	4. 7.11	4. 2. 2
Victoria ..	989	4. 6. 0	4. 6. 0	4. 1. 7	985	4. 5. 8	4. 1. 8
S. Australia	957	4. 2. 0	4. 4. 0	4. 2. 4	953	4. 4. 0	4. 2. 9
W. Australia	953	4. 1. 0	4. 5. 4	4. 4. 0	969	4. 6. 3	4. 3. 7
Tasmania ..	976	4. 3. 0	4. 3. 0	3.19. 9	966	4. 2. 0	3.19. 8

- Average for "5 towns" in each State, weighted by population.
- Corresponding to the December Quarter 1940 "Court" Index numbers with the addition of the special loadings. To be operative from beginning of first pay period in February.
- In New South Wales the Basic Wage of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration is adopted in State Awards. Victoria and Tasmania have no declared State Basic Wage, but awards follow Commonwealth Rates to a large extent; and Commonwealth rates have been shown for these States. For Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia current State Basic Wages are shown.
- This represents the Basic Wage of each State with adjustments for differences in the cost of living (C Series).